

Message Text

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S E C R E T ATHENS 3176

EXDIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU, CY

SUBJECT: CONVERSATIONS WITH BITSIOS

1. JACK KUBISCH, EAGLETON AND I MET FOR AN HOUR WITH BITSIOS PRIOR TO A TWO-HOUR LUNCHEON. I CONVEYED MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONVERSATIONS WE HAD HAD IN ANKARA ALONG FAIRLY REALISTIC LINES BUT STILL PUTTING STRESS ON THE EVIDENT DESIRE OF THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER TO BEGIN DIRECT TALKS WITH THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. I DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ANKARA, THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF OUR AID CUTOFF ON OUR ABILITY TO CONVERSE WITH THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT BUT PUTTING THE EMPHASIS ON OUR DESIRE DESPITE ANY HANDICAPS TO CONTINUE TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE. I SAID THAT THE TURKS SEEM TO WANT THE CONVERSATIONS IN VIENNA TO PROCEED WITHOUT ANY ULTIMATA WHICH WOULD CAUSE THEIR INTERRUPTION WHILE TIME WAS ALLOWED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BILATERAL DIALOGUE. I ALSO STRESSED THE CONCERN OF THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES ABOUT THE AEGEAN SITUATION AND PARTICULARLY THE REARMAMENT OF SOME OF THE ISLANDS. OF COURSE I COULD NOT HIDE FROM THEM THE FACT THAT I WAS UNABLE TO BRING THE SPECIFIC DETAIL THEY HAD REQUESTED US TO OBTAIN ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR TURKISH FLEXIBILITY ON TERRITORY.

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2. IN THE MORNING SESSION BEFORE LUNCH, BITSIOS DID NOT

REACT TO MY PRESENTATION BUT MERELY ASKED QUESTIONS OF DETAIL. AT THE LUNCHEON HE HAD OBVIOUSLY HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK WITH CARAMANLIS AND HE REPORTED THE REACTION OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AS ONE OF DISAPPOINTMENT THAT WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS A "BREAKTHROUGH" HAD NOT BEEN ACHIEVED. HE SEEMED SLIGHTLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE DESIRE FOR DIALOGUE AND REITERATED THAT THE PROPOSED MEETINGS MUST START OFF WITH THE AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE AS THE ONLY OFFICIAL AGENDA ITEM, BUT THAT OF COURSE WHEN THE MINISTERS MEET THEY COULD DISCUSS CYPRUS AND PERHAPS OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES. HE WAS AT PAINS TO POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THESE CONVERSATIONS SHOULD NOT BE BURDENED WITH OTHER ISSUES AND WAS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE AEGEAN ISLANDS WHERE HE REFERRED TO THE NON-NEGOTIABILITY OF MATTERS RELATING TO GREEK SOVEREIGNTY.

3. MY OVERALL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE GREEKS ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY ARE NOW ONCE AGAIN BEING FACED WITH THE QUESTION OF DEALING DIRECTLY AND VIRTUALLY ALONE WITH THE TURKS. THEIR EXPERIENCE TELLS THEM THAT CONVERSATIONS SUCH AS THESE IN THE PAST HAVE NOT PRODUCED USEFUL RESULTS OR WHEN THE RESULTS WERE AGREED THEY WERE NEVER IMPLEMENTED. PRESUMABLY, THE WEAKNESS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN ANKARA ALSO LEADS THEM TO BE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SUCH TALKS. BUT I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES CONTACTS THEY HAVE ALREADY HAD WITH THE TURKS HAVE LED TO AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO SOME DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MINISTERS IF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THOSE TALKS CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED. (THE CONFUSION THAT APPARENTLY RESULTED FROM TURKISH DISCUSSIONS WITH STAVROPOULOS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED, AS FAR AS THE GREEK SIDE IS CONCERNED, BY INDICATIONS TO THE TURKS THAT STAVROPOULOS WENT BEYOND HIS BRIEF. MORE RECENT DIRECT CONTACTS APPEAR TO HAVE CONFIRMED HOWEVER THAT BITSIOS IS PREPARED TO MEET WITH THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER AFTER SOME PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE AGENDA AND SCENARIO FOR SUCH A MEETING.)

4. ON CYPRUS, THE GREEKS ARE PESSIMISTIC THAT THE COMMUNAL TALKS WILL GO VERY FAR. I ENCOURAGED THEM TO PROBE ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE TWO PROPOSALS NOW ON THE TABLE AND NOW ALLOW THE TALKS TO BREAK DOWN IN THE FIRST STAGE ON QUESTIONS OF PRINCIPLE. THEY SEEM TO ACCEPT THIS BUT HAVE THEIR DOUBTS

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THAT DENKTASH WOULD ALLOW THIS KIND OF PROCEDURE TO BE APPLIED. FOR THIS REASON THEY PUT GREAT STORE IN WALDHEIM'S ROLE AS THE INITIATOR OF PROCEDURAL COMPROMISES THAT WILL HELP KEEP THE TALKS GOING. I CAUTIONED THEM ON THE TURKISH SENSITIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO WALDHEIM'S ROLE.

5. BITSIOS RAISED WITH ME THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GREECE. I GAVE HIM A SUMMARY OF WHERE OUR CON-

SIDERATIONS AND DECISIONS STOOD. HE WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED TO KNOW WHEN A DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN ON GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND I REPLIED THAT THIS QUESTION WAS ONE THAT HAD TO BE CAREFULLY STUDIED BY THE ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF THE SENSITIVITY OF RESTORING GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GREECE AT A TIME WHEN AN EMBARGO WAS BEING APPLIED TO TURKEY. I SAID THAT THE LINKAGE ON THIS MATTER WAS UNAVOIDABLE FOR THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. ON OTHER ASPECTS OF ASSISTANCE, I INDICATED THAT WE WERE PROCEEDING AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE TO TRY AND BE RESPONSIVE TO GREEK REQUESTS, ALTHOUGH FUNDS WERE LIMITED IN THIS FISCAL YEAR IN THE AREA OF FMS CREDITS, BUT WE WERE WILLING TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS IN THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR.

6. BITSIOS SAID HE WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH CAGLAYANGIL FOR UP TO A WEEK AROUND THE MIDDLE OF MAY IN ROME OR SOME OTHER MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SITE IN EUROPE (NOT VIENNA) IF THE PRELIMINARIES COULD BE CLEARED AWAY IN TIME. HE THOUGHT SUCH A SESSION WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CARAMANLIS AND DEMIREL TO MEET AT THE NATO SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS THE END OF MAY, ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT SPEAKING FAANKLY HE DID NOT EXPECT THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS COULD ACCOMPLISH MUCH IN ONE OR TWO MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS BEYOND POSSIBLY IMPROVING THE OVERALL TONE AND ATMOSPHERE OF GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS.

7. ALTHOUGH WE HAD EXPECTED BITSIOS TO VOLUNTEER HIS REGRETS ONCE AGAIN FOR THE EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO OUR EMBASSY HERE LAST MONDAY NIGHT, I HAD TO RAISE THE SUBJECT MYSELF EXPRESSING MY STRONG CONCERN AT THE INADEQUATE PROTECTION PROVIDED. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE AND THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WERE INDEED VERY SORRY ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, SAYING IT WAS THE WORK OF ONLY A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS ANARCHISTS, AND HE ASSURED ME IT WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO
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HAPPEN AGAIN.

8. I REPEATEDLY STRESSED TO BITSIOS THAT AS A RESULT OF THE AID CUTOFF OUR INFLUENCE WITH THE TURKS HAD BEEN SEVERELY CURTAILED. I SAID THAT THIS WAS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE CUTOFF AND THAT THE INCIPIENT AND POTENTIALLY VERY HARMFUL ALIENATION OF TURKEY FROM THE US COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE IN GREECE'S INTEREST. I CONVEYED MY IMPRESSION THAT THE TURKS BELIEVED THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WAS TO LARGE EXTENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SUSPENSION AND THAT IN ADDITION TO THE INCREASING POSSIBILITY THAT THE TURKS WOULD TAKE SOME RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST THE US, ONE COULD NOT EXCLUDE THAT THE TURKS MIGHT AT SOME POINT TAKE ACTION AGAINST GREECE AS WELL. CERTAINLY, I SAID, GREECE'S DIPLOMATIC AND OTHER EFFORTS TO TRY TO ISOLATE AND MOUNT PRESSURES ON TURKEY

WAS A VERY RISKY LINE OF POLICY AND COULD PRODUCE RESULTS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE GREECE DESIRED. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT BOTH THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AND THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD SHOW THE GREATEST POSSIBLE RESTRAINT AND MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT TO PROMOTE A REALAXATION OF TENSIONS AND THUS CREATE A MORE CONDUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT. I ALSO TOLD BITSIOS THAT THE GOG COULD COUNT ON YOU TO CONTINUE TO HELP WHEREVER YOU COULD TOWARDS SUCH ENDS.

9. IN PARTING, I REMINDED BITSIOS THAT YOU WOULD BE GOING TO TURKEY FOR THE CENTO MEETING MAY 21-23 AND THAT IF HE OR CARAMANLIS HAD ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS OR SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW YOU COULD BE HELPFUL DURING THIS PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AHEAD, HE SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO LET YOU KNOW. HE SAID EH APPRECIATED THIS, SENT HIS BEST REGARDS AND SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

10. I AM SCHEDULED TO LEAVE ATHENS TOMORROW MORNING FOR THE BILDEBURG CONFERENCE AND AM PLANNING TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON SUNDAY NIGHT.
KUBISCH

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